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SUBJECT: INDIAN REACTION TO AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S CONVICTION

REF: State 83598

¶1. (SBU) We discussed reftel points on August 17 with Anju Ranjan, MEA Under Secretary for Asian Affairs, and pressed for a strong GOI expression of disappointment about ASSK's conviction and GOI advocacy for pursuit of a more productive path when speaking with Burmese officials. Ranjan referred to an August 11 MEA press statement (set forth verbatim in para 2) that "goes to the limit" of what India is prepared to say publicly about Burma. Ranjan stated that India will continue a "pragmatic" policy approach to Burma that prioritizes border security between Burma and India's insurgency-plagued and ethnically-diverse northeast region.

¶2. (U) Transcript of August 11 Indian MEA Spokesperson statement on ASSK conviction. Begin statement: We have seen reports of the sentencing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar for a period of eighteen months. India has emphasized to the Government of Myanmar the need to expedite their political reform and national reconciliation process and have noted the various steps taken so far by the Government of Myanmar in this direction. We have maintained that this process should be broad based, including the various ethnic groups. In this context, the release of political prisoners will no doubt receive due attention." End statement.

Roemer